

and I think it would be helpful both ways: To eliminate some bad behavior that might occur and to create a better image on the part of the public that these things are being looked into and that the standards are there.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Bennett. What I am trying to say is this: I am trying to think out loud about it—is it possible to legislate ethics and morality and honesty? Is that matter not, in the final analysis, going to have to be settled by the constituency of the Representative or the employee?

Mr. BENNETT. Well, if you are referring to the second group of things I referred to, which is statutory law, you realize that most of this report that I referred to deals with statutory law. If you are referring to that, obviously you can make improvements.

The first law probably was a law against murder and to say that there are not fewer murders because of this law, I think, is to make an untrue statement. I don't know when that law was written, probably thousands of years ago, but to say that laws—I will put it this way: It is obvious that no law can make a man good, but it is also obvious that a law can make a man perform well or do things well and not do bad things because of the penalty which may be applied to him.

All of us here are members of some religious faith and I think we would all agree that the only way in which we can make ourselves better is to live by high spiritual standards, but we cannot enact anything like that into law. That could not be done.

So far as the second aspect of it is concerned, the bringing forth of new statutory law with specific penalties, obviously this committee can do that. People have been doing this for thousands of years, and successfully, to improve society. As to the first point of drawing a general code of ethics for Members of Congress and just leaving it in the gray area without any real prohibitions, I think your observations are well taken. I think it is very difficult to draw a general or even rather specific thing in this field.

I am sure it could be done and would do some good, but I am not saying it would be an easy thing to do.

I was going to say after it is done, if it can be done, and I believe it can be done, I think there would be two benefits, as I have already mentioned. One of them is to raise the standards of the House and the other is to allay the apprehensions of the public, which I think is a good thing to do. But this is not the main thrust of this committee.

The main thrust of this committee is not just to do that; it is to see wherever the deportment or activities of Members of Congress should be restricted in whatever fashion, by statutory law or whatever it might be. I am more hopeful that something can be done in the field of statutory law than I am in drawing a statement which is just going to appeal to people's higher principles.

Like you, I question whether, if you don't put some teeth in it, it is going to be very effective.

The CHAIRMAN. It was the question of standards, the code of ethics, I had reference to and was emphasizing particularly.

However, I recognize that, due to recent developments and events that have happened, there is a great demand for this Congress to do something and I assume that something will be done.

Mr. Anderson?